

the German POW camp for American officers where General Patton's son-in-law also was being held. As a result of the ill-fated raid to liberate the POWs in Hammelburg, all POWs were evacuated from camp and were forced to walk a treacherous journey of 241 miles in subzero weather across Germany before their liberation on May 2, 1945.

Mr. Thompson's account of his harrowing experiences at Hammelburg and during this long march is a sobering reminder to readers of the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform. In his introduction he wrote, "The fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge has passed. World War II seems ancient history to my grandchildren as much as the Civil War seemed to me when I was growing up. This narrative is for my family as much as for the public, a memoir of a horrible time, the likes of which I hope they will never have to live."

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to commend Harry Thompson for publishing his memoirs. He says that he hopes that other Veterans and POWs will share their stories and "that together we can record what it is for America to be at war, what it is to serve in the armed Forces of the United States of America and, after service during wartime, what it means to salute the flag as well as why we, as Veterans, sometimes have a tear or two when we see a patriotic ceremony or parade."

Harry Thompson has served our Nation in two important ways—by his service and sacrifice during World War II, and by the publication of his book that will be part of the history of America for all to read. I am honored to pay tribute today in the House of Representatives to this great American and Veteran of World War II and to thank him for his service to our Nation.

TO RECOGNIZE THE DEDICATION
OF FORT FILLMORE, NEW MEX-
ICO IN HONOR OF FIRST LIEU-
TENANT JOHN SALOPEK

HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2005

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the dedication of Fort Fillmore, New Mexico in honor of First Lieutenant John

Salopek, as celebrated in the biography by Gerald Carson, "Big John", or 1Lt John Salopek, to whom Fort Fillmore is being dedicated today, was born on September 17, 1921 in Croatia. At age eight, he arrived in the United States, settling in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Salopek received a Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) commission in June 1944. He was assigned to a platoon leader position in 1st Platoon, Company G of the infamous 42nd "Rainbow" Division, 7th US Army. Salopek's unit arrived in Marseille, France in December, 1944. The unit fought in the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign near Gernsheim, France. On January 5, 1945, Salopek's platoon was attacked by German panzers, and most were taken prisoner of war (POW) the next day. Salopek was taken to a headquarters command post of the elite Waffen-Schutztaffel (SS). Later, Salopek was transferred to Hammelburg Offizierlager XIIIIB (Oflag) POW camp of 1,500 officers, to include the son of Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin and the son-in-law of General Patton. On March 26, 1945, General Patton ordered Task Force Baum to Hammelburg to rescue the pawns. Only 300 of the 1,500 were rescued, to include 1LT Salopek. Two days later, Task Force Baum was captured by Germans. Most were either killed or again taken POW. Salopek evaded capture and fled to a German farm house near Richenbuch, where he remained until American troops liberated the Hammelburg POW camp on April 5, 1945. The following year, 1LT Salopek, returned to his family's farm in Mesilla, New Mexico.

Salopek's father left over 300 acres of pecan farms to John in the Las Cruces area. Salopek spent the remainder of his life working his land.

1LT Salopek was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze, and Purple Heart for action in the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign. He died on April 15, 2002."

TRIBUTE TO LATE JIM DUFF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2005

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is with regret and deep sadness that I rise to honor James "Jim"

Duff, a constituent from Rialto, California who passed away on December 11, 2005. I cannot begin to express how saddened I am by the passing of my friend Jim. All men die, but not all men really live; we can honestly say that Jim lived to the fullest. He was a model citizen, veteran, community leader, father, grandfather, and an extraordinary man.

Jim Duff was born and raised in Bonham, Texas but lived in Rialto, California for many years until his passing. Jim was a remarkable example of courage and sacrifice. He joined the Air Force and fought in World War II and Vietnam. Jim was a dedicated soldier who risked his life in the line of duty. For instance he was part of Project Ivy, the famous first test of a hydrogen bomb at the Eniwetok atoll. Nevertheless, one of his proudest accomplishments was Operation Fiddles, an effort to deliver food to innocent victims of war.

After 25 years of service in the military, Jim retired in 1970 to enjoy retirement with his lovely wife of 55 years, Mrs. Doris Duff. Jim and Doris met in Bonham, Texas where they grew up and went to school together. Aside from Doris, his sister Mary Fae Kamm, his son Bobby Douglas Duff, and two grandchildren. Sequoia and Madrone, survive Jim. His dedication and courage live in his family; his son is a successful business owner in Duncanville, Texas and his deceased daughter Carol D-Lynn lost her life while rescuing her children from a dangerous riptide.

Since retiring from the Air Force, Jim had become a fixture of the community. He was Commander of Post 8737 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for fourteen years and held office within the organization at the statewide and national level, even serving as National VFW Post American Commander. In the Veterans of Foreign Wars, he dedicated himself to help fellow veterans by volunteering twice a week without fail at Loma Linda Veterans Hospital. Jim helped veterans fill out paperwork, file claims, and fight for the health care rights they deserve. I knew him well as a member of my Veterans Advisory Board.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore wish to offer the condolences of a grateful Nation to the family of Mr. James Duff, an irreplaceable man who will not be forgotten.